

A Mode of Preventing

FRAUD AT THE BALLOT-BOX

AND OF FACILITATING THE EXERCISE OF

THE RIGHT OF SUFFRAGE.

CITIZENS :

We submit for your consideration, the following paper recently read before our section, by citizen, Thos. J. Durant. The subject, like every thing that relates to the improvement of representative government, is eminently entitled to the attention of our Association.

Without accepting the plan herein proposed as a finality, we deem it highly suggestive and would like to hear your views on the same subject.

Occasional interchanges of opinion between the various sections of the I. W. A., will tend, at once, to stimulate thought, to promote the only safe and desirable harmony of views, that which follows a thorough consideration of the subjects before us, and to draw our members into closer and more friendly relations. We therefore suggest that any reply you may make to us, be also sent, should you find it convenient, to the other sections of the I. W. A. in this country.

Fraternally yours,

THOS. J. DURANT,
R. J. HINTON,
M. M. WALBRIDGE.
T. C. GREY,
E. T. PETERS.

Committee of Section 23, I. W. A.

With regard to suffrage in our popular elections, two circumstances call for profound attention. They are these: First, that in certain localities, ballot-box stuffing and repeating carry elec-

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No. 1.

ELECTION:
JULY 4, 1879

No. 1.

For Governor :

For State Senate :

For State General Assembly :

For Congress :

[L. S.]

JOHN SCRIVENER,
Notary Public.

JOHN CUMMING,
Candidate (or Agent.)

THOMAS WILLING,
Candidate (or Agent.)

tions against lawful votes; second, that women may soon be suffragans. The first should be checked, the latter should be made comfortable.

To effect both these objects, the following system of voting is proposed :

There shall be a faithful registration of votes.

The name of each registered voter shall bear a distinct number on the registration list, which shall be numbered from one upwards consecutively, and a registration shall be made in each registration district established by law.

Each registration district shall be an election district, and in each there shall be prepared a book similar to a bank check-book, like what appears on the next page.

The left-hand portion of the plate is the stub which remains in the book ; the right-hand portion is the ticket, to be separated from the stub and delivered to the voter. The stub remains in the custody of the officers of registration, and shows how many lawful tickets have been issued. Instead of being separated by a vertical cut, the ticket may be separated by an irregular line from the stub, which might in some cases afford additional security.

This ticket-book is to be made up at the close of the registration. Each stub and annexed ticket is to bear the same number, and these are to correspond with the numbers on the registration list, from one consecutively upwards to the highest number on the registration list, and no further.

Each ticket is to be signed and stamped or sealed by a public officer previously designated by law for that purpose, and in presence of the candidates, if they wish to be present, or of persons appointed by them ; and each ticket shall also be signed by the candidates or a person selected by the supporters of the candidates on either side. Instead of this, the ticket might be signed by some public officer, not himself a candidate, but previously designated by law for the purpose ; and as the object of these provisions is merely to authenticate beyond a doubt the legality of the ticket, any other scheme adequate to effect that end may be adopted.

As to the names of candidates to be voted for, the tickets are to be blank ; the names only of the offices to be filled are to be found on the ticket when delivered to the voter.

Each ticket, after having been in this manner numbered, stamped and verified, is to be placed in a letter envelope and sealed up,

and then all these envelopes, containing each a ticket, are to be thoroughly intermingled and shuffled up together, in order that the number which will be placed on the list of voters made up at the time the votes are counted at the close of the election may not correspond with the number of votes on the registration list, to the end that the secrecy of the ballot may remain inviolate.

After having been thus thoroughly shuffled together, each envelope containing a ticket is to be addressed to a name on the registration list until all are thus addressed; and the registration lists and the addressed envelopes, therefore, correspond exactly. Each envelope is then delivered to the voter, personally, whose name it bears.

Each voter puts on his ballot the names of the candidates he may prefer, and he can vote with no other ballot than that.

At each election there may be as many places for voting, and the polls may be kept open so long as convenience may require.

Polling the votes consists merely in the act of each voter slipping a ballot into a convenient box, such, for instance, as the iron street post office boxes, of which the election commissioners keep the keys. There is to be no challenging or questioning of the voter, and the operation is to be performed with no more trouble, or unpleasant contact than is met with in putting a letter in the post office.

At the time fixed by law, the ballot-boxes are opened and the ballots counted by the proper officer, and publicly declared.

Any paper or ballot found in the box not numbered, stamped and verified, as above stated, is thrown out by the officers whose duty it is to count the ballots.

In this system "ballot-box stuffing" and "repeating" cannot be practised; it would save time, trouble, and much of the annoyance now experienced, and so likely to prove very disagreeable to women should the present mode of voting be persisted in.

The essential idea of the plan originated with Dr. A. de Bonnard, of Paris.

T. J. D.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *February 13th, 1827.*

ADDRESS REPLY TO

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